

THE MAN FROM THE COMPANY

by Barb's S.F. News Bureau

WITH A VICE Presidential Commission and no less than eight Congressional Committees baying outside the door of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), its Director, William Colby, has taken to the luncheon circuit to buff up the Agency's image.

Last week Colby spoke in San Francisco to 900 members of the Commonwealth Club. He said that the United States needed spying to keep America secure "in this dangerous world" and he saw nothing wrong with an intelligence agency operating secretly in a free society.

His speech jarred dramatically with disclosures made by the press and former employees of the agency.

Colby argued that intelligence was necessary since Americans live just thirty minutes away from "aimed and packed nuclear weapons." The current investigations of the CIA, he warned, could not prevent the agency from conducting its "essential services." "We could not," he continues, "throw the baby out with the bath water."

What are the CIA's "essential services." According to Colby, the CIA's major role is to collect intelligence information, analyze it and prepare reasonable reports for government and the military. "Its essential feature," Colby said, "is that it is an intellectual process."

Colby's picture of the CIA as a cool, academic-like, think-tank is in remarkable contrast with the known facts.

According to Victor Marchetti and John Marks, both former members of the "intelligence community" whose book "CIA and Cult of Intelligence" helped peel the Agency's cover, the CIA puts its energy into these "intellectual processes." From the annual budget of \$750 million, \$550 million are earmarked for clandestine services -- espionage, counter-espionage and covert action. In fact, more than 30% of the CIA's employees and nearly 10% of its money is spent on the "intellectual process" of intelligence analysis and information processing.

That the CIA has triggered revolutions, backed fascist regimes, engaged in secret paramilitary operations and worse, Colby, himself, is well aware. After all, he was the director of the Clandestine Services Division of the CIA before he was appointed Director. He has spent his entire career as a clandestine "dirty trickster" for the government.

Phoenix Program

During World War II Colby, a Princeton graduate, served in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the embryo of the CIA. He cut his teeth as a paramilitary operator parachuting into Nazi occupied France and Norway.

In 1951, with a law degree from Columbia University and having worked a brief above-ground stint at the National Labor Relations Board, Colby returned to Scandinavia as the CIA's spy at the US embassy in Stockholm.

In 1959, he began work in the Far East. It was Colby who in the mid-sixties orchestrated the US "secret" war in Laos, with more than 30,000 Meo and other tribesmen operating as a clandestine, army equipped and paid by the CIA. It was Colby who directed the battles against the Pathet Lao, the Air America bombing runs and the sorties into China and North Vietnam.

Such was Colby's success in Laos that the agency turned him loose on the then burgeoning war in Vietnam. From his post in Washington, D.C. he oversaw the founding of the Counter Terror program, a clandestine operation whose unfortunate title was soon changed to Provisional Reconnaissance. This was a unilateral program without the recognition of the Saigon regime.

The CIA recruited, organized, supplied and paid terror teams whose job was, according to Marks and Marchetti, to "use Vietcong terror tactics -- assassination, abuses, kidnappings and intimidation --

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program which we supported to make it better." The CIA, according to Colby, was involved to insure better treatment of V.C. prisoners and to make sure that V.C. leaders, rather than followers, were marked for capture.

In 1971 Colby testified before a Congressional Committee that 20,567 V.C. were killed in just two and a half years. Saigon put the figure at nearer 41,000.

Last week Colby admitted there were a "few mis-steps, but they were few and far between." He said that "very few people were improperly killed" and emphasized that the program's purpose was to bring the operation more in line with "American ideals and principles."

Colby also in his speech last week, departed from the historical CIA position and, in response to deepening distrust of the CIA, said that the agency's enabling laws are too vague. He said that he looks forward to new laws more precisely spelling out the agency's functions.

He referred to the 1947 Charter as "deliberately phrased circumlocutions." He is not wrong about that. The Charter itself has been fleshed out with secret directives from the National Security Council and only a few government officials know what these amendments to the Charter are.

Colby said last week that he "fully supports" procedures to insure supervision, control and accountability with respect to intelligence."

It is interesting that Colby opposed such legislation in 1972 when it was introduced by Senator John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky. That law would have forced the CIA to report regularly to relevant committees on current intelligence. Colby argued then that the needs of the Congress could be better served by informal discussions.

But, of course, that was before Watergate, in whose moralizing aftermath Colby has prospered. When Colby left Vietnam in 1971, where he held the rank of Deputy Ambassador, the CIA immediately took him back as a regular employee. Then Director Richard Helms appointed Colby to the post of Executive Director Comptroller -- the number three spot in the agency.

CIA 1.01 Colby, William
OR 92 Commonwealth
Club of San
Francisco
CIA 4.01 Operation Phoenix
(orig under Colby)

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